

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) (03-05-2010)		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  Minimizing risk to mission: posturing U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety & Security Teams to respond				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) LCDR Thomas E. Kuhar, USCG				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT .....	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 resulted in numerous enhancements in security throughout the United States including the maritime environment. The United States Coast Guard was designated as the lead federal agency for maritime homeland security. Congress required numerous maritime security enhancements by the U.S. Coast Guard in the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, including the establishment of Maritime Safety and Security Teams. The Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST) provide rapidly deployable, specialized waterborne and shore side antiterrorism forces for critical maritime infrastructure and strategic maritime shipping throughout the ports of the United States and ports of interest abroad. The current utilization of MSSTs represents an unbalanced equation of risk versus mission accomplishment. MSSTs should be reserved to function as a contingency response asset for significant national or regional maritime incidents and not utilized to fulfill day-to-day mission requirements in routine Coast Guard operations. This paper reviews the specific training and operational requirements as well as the primary intent of the MSSTs then analyzes the utilization of the Teams in two separate Sectors. Additionally, parallels to the findings drawn through a Special Missions Review Group report detailing specific requirements for specially trained forces are established. Finally, this paper draws conclusions about the utilization of routine employment of Maritime Safety and Security Teams to minimize operational level risk to mission of the Coast Guard's Ports Waterways and Coastal Security missions.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Coast Guard Maritime Safety & Security Teams, risk to mission, maritime homeland security, USCG specialized forces.					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  22	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Department
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3414

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**Minimizing risk to mission:  
Posturing U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Teams to respond**

by

**Thomas E. Kuhar  
Lieutenant Commander  
United States Coast Guard**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College, the United States Coast Guard, or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**03 May 2010**

## **Contents**

Introduction.....	1
Coast Guard Traditional Roles.....	3
Establishment of Maritime Safety & Security Teams .....	5
MSST Force Employment .....	10
Proper Force Utilization.....	14
Conclusion .....	15

## **Abstract**

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 resulted in numerous enhancements in security throughout the United States including the maritime environment. The United States Coast Guard was designated as the lead federal agency for maritime homeland security. Congress required numerous maritime security enhancements by the U.S. Coast Guard in the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, including the establishment of Maritime Safety and Security Teams. The Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST) provide rapidly deployable, specialized waterborne and shore side antiterrorism forces for critical maritime infrastructure and strategic maritime shipping throughout the ports of the United States and ports of interest abroad. The current utilization of MSSTs represents an unbalanced equation of risk versus mission accomplishment. MSSTs should be reserved to function as a contingency response asset for significant national or regional maritime incidents and not utilized to fulfill day-to-day mission requirements in routine Coast Guard operations. This paper reviews the specific training and operational requirements as well as the primary intent of the MSSTs then analyzes the utilization of the Teams in two separate Sectors. Additionally, parallels to the findings drawn through a Special Missions Review Group report detailing specific requirements for specially trained forces are established. Finally, this paper draws conclusions about the utilization of routine employment of Maritime Safety and Security Teams to minimize operational level risk to mission of the Coast Guard's Ports Waterways and Coastal Security missions.

## INTRODUCTION

One does not have to look too deeply, nor speculate too hard, to estimate the impacts a maritime security incident in one of the United States' major ports will have on the overall economy and security of the country. The impacts that Hurricane Katrina had on the national, regional, and local economies were substantial. In 2002, West Coast port labor workers were locked out of the ports amid failed union negotiations which had an immediate and nationwide impact on the economy and availability of goods.<sup>1</sup>

While Katrina and the labor lock-out in Los Angeles were not terrorist related events, consider for a moment the impact on the national economy and sense of security of the average United States citizen if a major terrorist attack were to occur in any U.S. port. Should a USS COLE or M/V Limburg type attack occur in a U.S. port, the economic and psychological ramifications would be significant.<sup>2</sup>

The United States has more than 95,000 miles of coast line dotted with more than 300 commercial ports of varying sizes and capacities. Between these ports lies a complex network of rivers, waterways, railways, and roads used to move goods from one place to another around the globe. It is widely recognized that more than 80 percent of the world's commerce is shipped via the maritime transportation system.<sup>3</sup> The global supply chain is dependent upon the free flow of merchant and defense shipping through these ports and the United States is a major component of this system.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hall, "*We'd Have to Sink the Ships.*"

<sup>2</sup> The M/V Limburg, a French oil tanker, was bombed in October 2002; The USS Cole was attacked while refueling in 2002. Both attacks were perpetrated by Al-Qaeda and focused substantial attention on maritime security.

<sup>3</sup> O'Rourke, April 2007. CRS-3.

The United States Coast Guard is designated as the lead federal agency for maritime homeland security<sup>4</sup> and is granted wide legal authorities and jurisdiction over vessels operating in and transiting to the waters of the United States.<sup>5</sup> Many federal agencies share responsibilities with the Coast Guard for their respective maritime homeland security functions such as the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) implemented several operational level changes to better position it to meet the maritime homeland security challenges and requirements it faces. The most significant change was a substantial enhancement in the capacity to respond to maritime security incidents. The most notable enhancements involved the Coast Guard's integration into the national intelligence community, increased Advanced Notice of Arrival regulations, an increase in overall force strength, and perhaps most significantly at the operational level, the establishment of Maritime Safety and Security Teams.

Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST) are designed to be rapid response forces capable of nationwide deployment as a direct response, active duty contingency force for terrorist threats. The current utilization of Maritime Safety and Security Teams represents an unbalanced equation of risk versus mission accomplishment. The Maritime Safety and Security Teams should be reserved to function as a contingency response asset for significant national or regional maritime incidents and not utilized to fulfill day-to-day mission requirements in routine Coast Guard operations.

To determine the appropriate utilization of the Maritime Safety and Security Teams, it is important to look at the Coast Guard's overall mandated responsibilities and activities, size and

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., CRS-1.

<sup>5</sup>Title 14 USC.

organizational construct, as well as the operational chain of command. A brief review of the requirements enacted upon the Coast Guard in the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 is necessary. This review will indicate that conflict arises during force allocation processes over the maintenance of specially trained contingency response forces and meeting daily operational port security missions exposing a potential risk to the Coast Guard's overall Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security response mission. Conclusions are drawn on appropriate force considerations to meet the maritime homeland security requirements for both routine and urgent response operations.

## **COAST GUARD TRADITIONAL ROLES**

Originally formed as the Revenue Marine Service in 1790, the Coast Guard has served as a “unique instrument of national power”<sup>6</sup> in a variety of roles and missions. Exercising wide ranging law enforcement and regulatory authorities and jurisdictions outlined in Title 14 of United States Code as well as military roles and missions outlined in Title 10 of United States Code, the Coast Guard has consistently responded to routine and urgent missions around the world. Specifically, the U.S. Coast Guard has eleven core missions statutorily mandated by U.S. Congress. These core missions include (listed in order of percentage of Coast Guard's operating expense):

1. Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security
2. Drug Interdiction
3. Aids to Navigation
4. Search and Rescue
5. Living Marine Resources (Fisheries Enforcement)
6. Marine Safety
7. Defense Readiness
8. Migrant Interdiction
9. Marine Environment Protection
10. Ice Operations

---

<sup>6</sup> Loy, “The Role of the Coast Guard.”

## 11. Other Law Enforcement<sup>7</sup>

To fulfill these mandated missions, the USCG has just 42,613 active duty members, 8,100 Reserves, and 7,341 civilian employees (2009 numbers).<sup>8</sup> The Coast Guard's forces are distributed geographically throughout the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, the U.S. territories and around the globe in support of marine safety and maritime security operations that have a direct linkage to the United States' maritime transportation system. Coast Guard Cutters are deployed on a daily basis in the Caribbean, Pacific, Atlantic, Arabian Gulf and within virtually every Geographic Combatant Commander's theater of operations conducting routine missions and are prepared to respond to maritime incidents of national interest.

U.S. Coast Guard chains of command are currently configured on Pacific and Atlantic Areas. This structure is being changed and is currently awaiting statutory approval of a single Operations Command (OPCOM) and a Force Readiness Command (FORCECOM).<sup>9</sup> Operational chains of command below the Area/OPCOM levels are generally structured on geographic Districts and further subdivided into Sectors. Each Sector is responsible for specific geographic areas and further broken down to tactical level units: stations, patrol boats, aids to navigation teams, marine safety field offices, etc.

Due to its very small force population, the Coast Guard has become well-versed in designing, staffing, training, and operating multi-mission platforms and crews to achieve its daily mission requirements. The advantage of such actions allows the Coast Guard to be able to readily adapt to emerging threats and operations and respond appropriately. However, as was learned most notably after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, this structure brings an inherent cost. If

---

<sup>7</sup> USCG missions website, <http://www.uscg.mil/top/about/> accessed on March 20, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Coast Guard Posture Statement 2010, retrieved on March 20, 2010 from <http://www.uscg.mil/comdt/DOCS/LOW.RES.CG%20FY09%20Posture%20Statement.FINAL.Jan29.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> USCG Modernization website, <http://www.uscg.mil/modernization/default.asp> accessed on April 15, 2010.



a service has its force spread across a wide array of mission requirements and geographically spread out around the continent, its flexibility to meet a large scale urgent threat is diminished. The Coast Guard's traditional focus of domestic operations was challenged after September 11 which created significant lessons learned for the service.<sup>10</sup>

Many Coast Guard platforms and personnel were shifted from their assigned missions immediately following the attacks in New York City, the Pentagon, and Pennsylvania. However, because Coast Guard funding and legislative authorities had not allocated sufficient forces or assets for contingency missions, many of the daily missions of Coast Guard units had to be reconsidered. Seventy-five percent of the Coast Guard's Atlantic Area Reserve force was recalled to active duty, constituting the service's single largest reserve call-up since World War II.<sup>11</sup> Then Captain Steve Branham, USCG, Chief of Staff for the Atlantic Area stated, "We just don't have things setting idle, ready to go. Something has to give, the pie is only so big and all we can do is resize the pieces and keep rebalancing mission priorities."<sup>12</sup> Vice Admiral James Hull, USCG Atlantic Area Commander, stated port security was not a new mission (in the wake of 9/11), but that it had not been the service's priority for some time which resulted in a severe reduction in routine expeditionary missions in the Atlantic Area such as fisheries, counternarcotics, and law enforcement patrols after the attacks.<sup>13</sup>

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF MARITIME SAFETY & SECURITY TEAMS**

In 2002, Congress passed the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA 2002). This legislation required the Coast Guard to increase emphasis on the maritime security

---

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, 45.

<sup>11</sup> Robinson, 26.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, 48.

<sup>13</sup> Robinson, 26.

component of its mission requirements.<sup>14</sup> Among other requirements, MTSA 2002 required the establishment of Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Teams and created additional billets to man them.<sup>15</sup> These teams were intended to create the active duty surge capacity needed to respond to a significant maritime security incident as a force multiplier to an area's organic Coast Guard forces. Given the very small nature of the U.S. Coast Guard, maintaining an active duty contingency force available for real-time/real-world response is critical as the service's other mandated missions would still require attention in the wake of a maritime security incident.

The Maritime Safety and Security Teams were originally located in 13 strategic ports nationwide; Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles/Long Beach, San Diego, Anchorage, Honolulu, Galveston/Houston, New Orleans, Miami, St. Mary's (Georgia), Chesapeake, New York and Boston.<sup>16</sup> MTSA requires that these units be trained, equipped, and capable of being employed to:

- (1) Deter, protect against and rapidly respond to threats of maritime terrorism
- (2) Enforce moving or fixed safety and security zones
- (3) Conduct high speed intercepts
- (4) Board, search, and seize any article or thing on or at, respectively, a vessel or facility found to present a risk to that vessel or facility, or to the port in general
- (5) Respond to criminal or terrorist act is within a port to minimize the impacts of a TSI
- (6) Rapidly deploy to supplement U.S. forces domestically or overseas
- (7) Assist with facility vulnerability assessments
- (8) Carry out other security missions as assigned<sup>17</sup>

Organized to be rapidly deployable, MSSTs are staffed with all requisite operational and support capacities. MSSTs have personnel support specialists, supply personnel, planning, armory and engineering/maintenance support divisions. Operationally, MSSTs are comprised of

---

<sup>14</sup> MTSA 2002.

<sup>15</sup> MTSA 2002 §70106

<sup>16</sup> MSST Chesapeake and Tactical Law Enforcement Team North merged in 2004 to create the Maritime Security Response Team.

<sup>17</sup> MTSA 2002 §70106.

a Waterside Security Detachment which encompasses the boat forces of the unit.<sup>18</sup> Boat operators (coxswains) receive specialized training in advanced boat handling techniques, vessel on vessel use of force, rules of engagement and are intimately familiar with all facets of fixed and moving security zone enforcement. MSSTs also have a Maritime Law Enforcement and Force Protection Detachment which specializes in all facets of maritime law enforcement, law enforcement authorities and jurisdiction ashore, vertical insertion/vertical delivery, close quarters combat, non-compliant boarding techniques and advanced marksman skills.<sup>19</sup> Most MSSTs also have additional capabilities in underwater security utilizing an Integrated Anti-Swimmer System (IAS)<sup>20</sup> and/or submersible Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) used for pier or hull sweeps; some MSSTs have both of these capabilities. Additionally, some MSSTs have canine explosive detection teams which mainstream USCG units do not have.

Since the establishment of the Maritime Safety and Security Teams, the Coast Guard subsequently established the Deployable Operations Group, a Flag Officer command which is responsible for all MSSTs, as well as Port Security Units, Tactical Law Enforcement Teams, National Strike Teams, the Maritime Security Response Team, and Coast Guard dive units. The Deployable Operations Group is a supporting commander providing specially trained forces to higher Coast Guard Operational Commanders and Geographic/Functional Combatant Commanders or other commands as directed by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and/or the Commandant of the Coast Guard.

MSST personnel receive specialized training depending on the billet they fill at the unit. With the wide range of security missions that MSSTs are charged to conduct, training and proficiency in these highly perishable skills is paramount to achieving these specialized missions. It is

---

<sup>18</sup> USCG MSST Program Manual, Appendix B.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Appendix C.

<sup>20</sup> For further information on IAS capabilities; [www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,uscg1\\_031405.00.html](http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,uscg1_031405.00.html)

because of the demanding training requirements that proper employment of the MSSTs is critical to ensure optimal mission performance when called upon to operate in their designed capacity.

Traditional Coast Guard Search & Rescue Stations (hereafter referred as Stations) also have substantial training and operational requirements. As Stations are multi-mission, they have a wide array of capabilities they must maintain. In addition to their primary Search and Rescue responsibilities, Stations maintain the ability to conduct routine law enforcement patrols and respond to urgent law enforcement incidents (boating under the influence, boating safety enforcement, and other law enforcement duties) as required or directed.

Both Station and MSST law enforcement personnel receive the same institutional training at the Coast Guard's Maritime Law Enforcement Academy, and recurring refresher training from visiting training teams and internal unit training programs. A major difference between the two types of units is in the execution of law enforcement duties. Whereas in a station, boat crews are cross trained as boarding officers and boarding team members, MSSTs utilize Maritime Law Enforcement/Force Protection personnel as their primary law enforcement teams. These personnel are generally not cross trained as boat crews and focus their daily work and training on their law enforcement functions.<sup>21</sup> MSST personnel also train to higher threat scenarios (room clearing and holding, vertical insertion techniques, hook and climb techniques, and non-compliant boardings) and techniques not required of station personnel.<sup>22</sup>

Stations also must be prepared to provide initial response capabilities in a limited capacity to marine pollution incidents, aids-to-navigation discrepancies, and marine safety incidents such as vessel groundings or collisions; requirements not normally expected of MSSTs.<sup>23</sup> As stations are required to maintain the ability to conduct all of these varied missions with manning based upon

---

<sup>21</sup> MSST Program Manual, (3-4) thru (3-5).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Appendix C.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 1-3.

the expected search and rescue response posture of a particular station, it is not practical to expect station personnel to maintain the operational proficiency which a higher threat maritime security incident requires and which MSST personnel are more focused upon.

Given the wide range of missions that a typical Coast Guard small boat station must be trained and equipped for, it is an easy analogy to compare them to a Swiss Army Knife. Stations are locally poised to respond to a multitude of scenarios and typically respond quickly and capably; although they may not have adequate personnel, equipment, or capacity to respond with the force or experience level necessitated by a higher threat incident. It is in these scenarios, that the specially trained and equipped Maritime Safety and Security Team forces are indispensable.

USCG Commander Lane, Chief of Response at USCG Sector Hampton Roads, Virginia stated

Since stations are multi-mission stations, I don't believe they are as capable or as skilled at executing the tactical missions that the MSSTs concentrate on. They are just spread too thin and have too many other requirements placed on them to become 'experts' at anything. I believe the MSST concept allows assigned personnel to come close to becoming 'experts' at the tactical/security mission set.<sup>24</sup>

However, given the Coast Guard's traditional law enforcement, search and rescue, regulatory functions and the volume of daily missions that must be achieved, it is difficult to maintain forces "at the ready" and not actually conducting operations. It is this situation which creates risk to mission support for the higher threat scenarios that MSSTs are trained and theoretically able to respond to. The Coast Guard's traditional "helping hand" role lies diametrically opposed to a more enhanced, robust military security posture required in the current counter-terrorism posture that it is expected to maintain.<sup>25</sup> For the Captain of the Port,<sup>26</sup> this creates friction in the

---

<sup>24</sup> Email of April 2, 2010 from CDR Bill Lane, Response Department Head, USCG Sector Hampton Roads, VA.

<sup>25</sup> Kelley, "*When Culture and Doctrine Collide*".

<sup>26</sup> For specific responsibilities of the Captain of the Port view; <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr;rgn=div8;view=text;node=33%3A1.0.1.1.1.1.1.3;idno=33;sid=78ca354c53bf4437295b4f0d3f41a05e;cc=ecfr>

allocation of forces assigned to achieve the many operational requirements that must be met in each port.

## **MSST FORCE EMPLOYMENT**

The Coast Guard’s highest fiscal expenditure in FY 2008 was on Ports, Waterways and Coastal Security (PWCS) missions accounting for 22 percent of the annual budget.<sup>27</sup> In a 2007 report for Congress, one of the main issues raised was the “sufficiency of Coast Guard funding, assets, and personnel levels for performing both homeland and non-homeland security missions.”<sup>28</sup> This same report indicated that PWCS missions constituted the largest expenditure of resource hours for fiscal year 2005.<sup>29</sup>

A review of employment activity of Sector Honolulu, Hawaii shows a significant portion of required routine PWCS missions were accomplished by MSST forces. The period reviewed was June – December 2009 and was provided by the Enforcement Division Chief and indicates:

**Table 1 - Sector Honolulu MSST Utilization June 009 - December 2009**

A. An average of 8.33 MSST employment days per month
B. MSST forces completed 19.45% of all Maritime Critical Infrastructure/Key Resources patrols.
C. MSST forces completed 20.4% of all fixed security zone patrols
D. MSST forces completed 19.2% of small vessel security boardings
E. MSST forces completed 4.5% of Especially Hazardous Cargo escorts
F. MSST forces completed 17.6% of High Value Unit escorts

---

<sup>27</sup> O’Rourke, April 2007, CRS-2.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., CRS-3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., CRS-4.

G. MSST forces completed 58.3% of High Capacity Passenger Vessel escorts <sup>30</sup>
--

A standardized record of MSST employment at the Sector level does not exist, so it is difficult to compare activity across Sectors. However, information received from Sector Hampton Roads, VA was analyzed and indicates an average of 8.5 days MSST employment days per month in calendar year 2009 for PWCS and other non-routine security missions (to include Presidential visit security). This data analysis is consistent with the mission statistics provided by Sector Honolulu.<sup>31</sup> Based on the two Sectors referenced here, MSSTs are engaged in routine PWCS and other security missions 28.1percent of the time in addition to their primary operational, training, maintenance, and readiness requirements.

Operational mandates upon the Captain of the Port require them to make tough decisions concerning which of their assets to assign to security missions and which missions may not be met unless additional forces are brought in. The enhanced security postures and operational requirements have created a need to routinely allocate MSST forces to conduct routine security patrols and escorts in many port areas, especially within the ports where a MSST is collocated with the Sector/Captain of the Port. Commander Lane stated that while balancing operational requirements for security patrols and activities he must carefully balance the operational and personnel tempo of his subordinate units. “When I get a MSST to conduct operations for me it allows my stations to maintain their normal (above Commandant standard) work week. So, I don’t have to increase their [personnel tempo] or choose what missions I’m NOT going to do in order to accomplish the security mission the MSST is doing”.<sup>32</sup> (*Emphasis included in original*)

---

<sup>30</sup> LCDR Bob Gardalli, email message to author of April 11, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> CDR Bill Lane, email message to author April 1, 2010.

<sup>32</sup> CDR Bill Lane, email message to author April 2, 2010.

Sectors naturally view the presence of an MSST in their area as a means to achieve a greater degree of their daily security mission requirements as the MSSTs have the necessary boats, personnel and training to conduct the mission. If the MSST is in its homeport and not engaged in daily operations it is easy, and frankly natural, to want to employ them to ensure that daily mission requirements are achieved as indicated by the data reviews detailed above. However, the utilization of MSSTs in this regards counters their intended purpose of being rapidly deployable and ready to respond to a significant maritime threat.

As previously stated, MSSTs are located in strategic ports throughout the United States and are capable of rapid deployment to the site of a known or anticipated maritime security incident. Funding and personnel constraints prohibit the establishment of an MSST in each of the main ports of the United States to augment local Captain of the Port organic forces. Given space-time considerations, the Deployable Operations Group has established “national go-teams” that are in the highest state of recall of all MSSTs.<sup>33</sup> These teams, apportioned as part of the annual Deployable Operations Group employment calendar, are responsible for the first wave of immediate response. However, subsequent teams may be slow to respond to a significant maritime security incident if they are engaged in routine security missions for a particular Sector and not immediately available to start loading their equipment and personnel for deployment.

In an article critical of the Coast Guard’s long multi-mission orientation, retired USCG Captain Bruce Stubbs outlines how the Coast Guard has shifted away from many of its national defense roles over the years preceding the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He emphasizes the need for the Coast Guard to focus efforts on personnel highly trained to perform specialized skills and to discard its “jack of all trades”<sup>34</sup> doctrine. The current utilization of

---

<sup>33</sup> USCG Deployable Operations Group, Paragraph 5.

<sup>34</sup> Stubbs, “*Multimission Costs too Much.*”



MSSTs for routine PWCS missions continues the multi-mission mindset and reduces the Coast Guard's role in maritime homeland defense and serves to jeopardize the response capacity to prevent substantial economic and security impacts should an attack occur in the ports of the United States. While Captain Stubbs's opinions may be viewed as provocative and in line with a specific agenda, the concern over whether to have highly skilled personnel ready to conduct specialized missions or rely on forces that are basically trained and routinely engaged is a significant issue to be resolved. With the inherent specialized training and readiness capacities of the Maritime Safety and Security Teams, it is critical to decide how best to employ these assets to achieve the greatest effect on the maritime security missions of the United States Coast Guard.

High risk, low frequency missions are not unique to the Coast Guard's maritime security efforts. Specialized forces are present in each of the armed services. For analysis, a brief comparison to the failed Iran hostage rescue mission in April 1980 was conducted.<sup>35</sup> The analysis revealed many similarities between the Iran hostage rescue efforts and potential requirements of the Coast Guard's response to a maritime terrorist threat. The Iran Rescue Mission Report stated the operations were high risk and would stress the capabilities of the people and equipment,<sup>36</sup> that full scale training and dress rehearsal may have revealed some of the command and control issues that arose during the actual operation,<sup>37</sup> and that the "ad hoc" nature of the organization may have contributed to some of the rescue mission's major issues.<sup>38</sup>

Direct parallels can be made and the Coast Guard can learn from this report with regard to the employment of MSSTs. The anticipated mission of MSST forces will be a high risk mission. The response to a maritime terrorist attack will test the physical and mental abilities of the personnel

---

<sup>35</sup> For detailed information on the Iran Rescue Mission, see "Rescue Mission Report" August 1980, Admiral J. L. Holloway, III, USN (ret), Chairman, Special Operations Review Group. United States Naval War College.

<sup>36</sup> Holloway, "Rescue Mission Report." 3.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 60.

and equipment involved to their limits. The necessity to have properly trained tactical crews who have rehearsed response scenarios is critical to the operational commander tasked with overall command and control of the operation. As detailed earlier, MSST forces routinely conduct full scale training and exercises on a host of terrorist response scenarios which allow them to react with a degree of familiarity that a typical Station coxswain and crew will not reasonably have. Lastly, established command relationships between the Deployable Operations Group, MSSTs, and the operational commanders which they support, reduces the likelihood that ad hoc command and control relationships can compromise the mission.

### **PROPER FORCE UTILIZATION**

Effective and efficient utilization of Maritime Safety and Security Teams would maximize the operational readiness and training proficiencies that the Team's specialized skills bring. Appropriate scheduling and employment of the teams should give due consideration to the concept of "skill fade"<sup>39</sup> that comes when highly technical and perishable skills, such as high speed boat tactics and advanced law enforcement competencies, are not routinely honed. The current allocation of MSST forces to accomplish the Coast Guard's routine PWCS missions denies these teams of available time to schedule the requisite training and exercises to keep their specialized skills as fresh as possible.

However, some could argue that the Coast Guard should prioritize the assignment of routine Coast Guard missions and maintain current PWCS operating levels utilizing MSST forces to augment Sector assets. This would require MSSTs to be apportioned to assist Sectors achieve their PWCS operational requirements and would reduce MSST's ability to train and rehearse response scenarios and diminish their ability to respond to a substantial maritime security threat.

---

<sup>39</sup> Till, 288-289.

This scenario requires Coast Guard leadership to accept a reduction in an available surge capacity for contingency operations.

Still others could argue that the MSSTs should be decommissioned and the billets that were created for these units be reprogrammed to allow individual Sector Commanders the opportunity to assign those billets to their subordinate units that they feel need them the most. This would remove all organic, active duty contingency response capacity from the Coast Guard and would severely limit a timely response to a maritime security threat without activating Reserve forces. Further impacts in executing core missions in other ports would have to be acceptable to operational planners as forces would have to be brought into an effected area to respond. Coast Guard leadership must accept the loss of a significant level of specially trained boat operators and law enforcement personnel and the impact that will have on the service's capacity to respond to a high threat security response incident. This scenario would put the Coast Guard in a position very similar to that which existed prior to September 11, 2001 and the enactment of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002.

## **CONCLUSION**

Given the potential ramifications a maritime security incident would have on the national infrastructure and economy, the Coast Guard must consider the most effective utilization of the Maritime Safety and Security Teams. Coast Guard strategic and operational level force planners should prioritize MSST employment solely as a contingency response capacity. This requires the acceptance of risk to accomplishment of routine security operations and would allow MSSTs to train and rehearse response scenarios in order to be optimally ready to respond when a maritime threat arises. A critical analysis of the classified parameters that establish the Coast Guard's PWCS goals would be required, but is beyond the scope of this paper. Through this analysis, a

calculated determination as to the exact degree of PWCS missions that can be met with organic Sector assets would have to be accepted as the threshold that can be met without an overall service strength increase. The potential cost to the Coast Guard, as the evidence addressed above indicates, could result in an approximate 25 percent reduction in overall routine security operations at the individual Sector level. This solution allows MSST forces to operate, train, and equip forces in a manner consistent with the intent of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. This allows for the most effective and efficient flow of specially trained forces to the site of a terrorist incident involving the maritime transportation network on which the country's economy and security is so vitally dependent.

## Bibliography

- Crea, Vivean. "The U.S. Coast Guard: A Flexible Force for National Security." *Naval War College Review*, 60(1), 14-23. 2007. Retrieved February 24, 2010 from ProQuest Military Module. (Document ID 137588481).
- DiRenzo, Joe, III, and Chris Doane. "Joint Coast Guard and Department of Defense Operations." *The United States Coast Guard, The Shield of Freedom 2006*, 126–133. (NWC 4023).
- Fluker, David P. "Maritime Homeland Security: Ensuring A Flexible Rapid Response" Research paper, Newport, RI. U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 2002.
- Frittelli, John F. *Port and Maritime Security: Background and Issues for Congress* Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, updated May 27, 2005.
- Lieutenant Commander Bob Gardalli. (USCG Sector Honolulu, HI, Enforcement Division Chief) Email message to author, "MSST Utilization." April 12, 2010.
- Hall, Peter V. Hall. "We'd Have to Sink the Ships": Impact Studies and the 2002 West Coast Port Lockout. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 18(4). November 2004: 354-367. Retrieved April 29, 2010, from Research Library. (Document ID: 737938331).
- Holloway, J. L., ADM, USN (ret). *Rescue Mission Report*. Special Operations Review Group. August 1980.
- Hull, James D., VADM, USCG, Cari B. Thomas, CDR, USCG, and Joe DiRenzo, LCDR, USCG. "What Was the Coast Guard Doing in Iraq?" U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (August 2003): 38–40. (NWC 3052).
- Kelley, Michael R. "When Culture and Doctrine Collide: Military, Multi-Mission, Maritime Service?" Research paper, Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 2002.
- Commander Bill Lane. (USCG Sector Hampton Roads, VA, Chief of Response), Email message to author, "MSST Utilization," April 1, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Email message to author, "MSST Thoughts." April 2, 2010.
- Loy, Admiral James M. "The Role of the Coast Guard in Homeland Security." Lecture. The Heritage Foundation, 21 December 2001.  
<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Lecture/The-Role-of-the-Coast-Guard-in-Homeland-Security> (accessed on 1 April, 2010).
- Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, Public Law 107-295-November 25, 2002  
[http://homeport.uscg.mil/cgi-bin/st/portal/uscg\\_docs/MyCG/Editorial/20061206/MTSA.pdf?id=f738d5d6ca627f36bbc485a7b46ac40c40fdad97](http://homeport.uscg.mil/cgi-bin/st/portal/uscg_docs/MyCG/Editorial/20061206/MTSA.pdf?id=f738d5d6ca627f36bbc485a7b46ac40c40fdad97) (accessed on March 2, 2010).

O'Rourke, Ronald. *Homeland Security: Coast Guard Operations - Background and Issues for Congress* Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, updated April 13, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Homeland Security: Coast Guard Operations – Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C. Congressional Research Service, June 1, 2006.

Parfomak, Paul W. and Frittelli, John. *Maritime Security: Potential Terrorist Attacks and Protection Priorities* Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, updated May 14, 2007.

Peterson, Gordon, I. "Seapower and the Reserve Components." *Joint Forces Quarterly*: JFQ, (36), 48-55. December 2004. Retrieved March 18, 2010 from ProQuest Military Module. (Document ID 796004291).

Robinson, Clarence A., Jr. "Supporting Combatant Commanders." *The United States Coast Guard, The Shield of Freedom 2004*. (NWC 2016).

Shultz, Richard H, Jr. "Showstoppers." *The Weekly Standard* (January 26, 2004).  
<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/003/613twavk.asp>  
(Accessed on March 2, 2010)

Stubbs, Bruce. "Multimission Costs Too Much." *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, 130 (8), 30-34. August 2004. Retrieved February 24, 2010, from ProQuest Military Module. (Document ID 676801681)

\_\_\_\_\_. *The U.S. Coast Guard's National Security Role in the Twenty First Century*. Research Paper. Center for Naval Warfare Studies, U.S. Naval War College. Newport, RI. June 1992.

Till, Geoffrey. *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*. London: Frank Cass, 2006.

Uhlig, Frank, Jr. "Fighting at and from the sea - A Second Opinion." *Naval War College Review* (Spring 2003). (NWC 4071). pp. 39-52.

United States Coast Guard. "About Us: Missions." <http://www.uscg.mil/top/about/> (accessed 02 March 2010).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Coast Guard Modernization.: <http://www.uscg.mil/modernization/default.asp> (accessed 15 April 2010).

\_\_\_\_\_. Deployable Operations Group to Deployable Specialized Forces, Message. R051331Z DEC 08. 05 December 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_. Maritime Safety and Security Team Program Manual (FOUO), Commandant Instruction Manual, COMDTINST M3510.3

- \_\_\_\_\_. Posture Statement 2010, retrieved on March 20, 2010 from  
<http://www.uscg.mil/comdt/DOCS/LOW.RES.CG%20FY09%20Posture%20Statement.FINAL.Jan29.pdf>
- \_\_\_\_\_. *U.S. Coast Guard: America's Maritime Guardian*, Coast Guard Publication 1, May 2009.
- United States Congress. U.S. Code, Title 14, Part I.  
[http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/14/usc\\_sup\\_01\\_14\\_10\\_I.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/14/usc_sup_01_14_10_I.html) (accessed March 2, 2010)
- \_\_\_\_\_. U.S. Code, Title 10, Subtitle A, Part I.  
[http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode10/usc\\_sup\\_01\\_10\\_10\\_A.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode10/usc_sup_01_10_10_A.html) (accessed March 2, 2010)
- U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department. *Reference Guide, Forces/Capabilities Handbook*. Newport, RI: Naval War College, July 2009. (NWC 3153K), 154-168.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Service Briefs*. "U.S. Coast Guard Briefing," CD-ROM. Naval War College Joint Military Operations. 2006. (NWC 2002F).
- U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard. *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*. October 2007.
- Wilson, J. R. "Coast Guard Expeditionary Forces." *The United States Coast Guard, The Shield of Freedom 2004*, 42-53.